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|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Notice of Allowability | Application No. | Applicant(s) | |
| | 09/348,693 | VAN ET TEN ET AL. | |
| | Examiner | Art Unit |  |
| Naeem Haq | 3625 | | |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 7/12/2004.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-10 and 12-26.
3. ☐ The drawings filed on _____ are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 6. ☒ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☒ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☒ to Paper No./Mail Date 1/13/2003.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 6. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date <u>10/29/2004</u> |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____ | 7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Amendment/Comment |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material | 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance |
| | 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Attorney Noreen Welch on October 29, 2004.

The application has been amended as follows:

Enter new claims as follows:

Claim 1: A procurement system for purchasing a special item between a buyer of the special item and at least one supplier capable of supplying the special item, said system comprising:

a fulfillment system for communicating between said buyer and said supplier;

an electronic database associated with said fulfillment system, said special item not being located within said database;

an electronic knowledge base including a plurality of predetermined relationships and a plurality of predetermined rules;

a special requisition for containing a description of said special item;

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a common language generator for normalizing said database with respect to said predetermined relationships in accordance with said predetermined rules of said knowledge base; and

said common language generator normalizing information obtained in part from said special requisition by using said knowledge base and adding the information to said database for future reference.

Claim 10: A procurement system for purchasing a desired item, comprising:

a normalized electronic catalog database comprising at least one unique catalog item, wherein each unique catalog item stored within said electronic catalog database is identified with respect to class, attribute, and value relationships;

a common language generator having a knowledge base, said knowledge base comprising a set of predetermined rules and said relationships used to convert free form catalog item information into said normalized electronic catalog database in accordance with said relationships;

an item selection device, said device relying on said relationships to locate the desired item within said electronic catalog database;

an item specifying device, said device being invoked after determining the desired item cannot be located by said item selection device within said electronic catalog database;

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a structured requisition subsystem for creating a structured requisition to uniquely identify the desired item that cannot be located within said catalog database using said relationships and at least one new class, attribute or value added to said relationships;

said common language generator normalizing information obtained in part from said structured requisition by using said knowledge base and adding the information to said database for future reference.

Claim 11: (Canceled)

Claim 12: A procurement system as recited in claim 10, wherein said relationships used to create said structured requisition further comprise identification of at least one supplier, said structured requisition being automatically sent to said identified at least one supplier by said system.

Claim 13: A procurement system as recited by claim 10, wherein said structured requisition is used to develop at least one new predetermined rule for uniquely identifying the desired item that cannot be located within said catalog database.

Claim 17: A method for continuously updating a procurement system comprising the steps of:

predetermining a set of rules to convert free form information associated with a catalog item into a normalized catalog item;

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providing a common language generator having an electronic knowledge base comprising said predetermined set of rules and predetermined relationships;

establishing, by said common language generator using said knowledge base, a normalized electronic catalog database of normalized catalog items based on predetermined rules and relationships;

processing a request for a special item not located within said catalog database using said predetermined relationships;

specifying an additional relationship in a structured requisition to uniquely identify the special item;

normalizing information obtained from said structured requisition by said common language generator using said knowledge base; and

adding the information to said catalog database for future reference.

Claim 19: A method as recited in claim 18, further comprising the steps of:

updating said rules to incorporate said new class, attribute or value from said specifying step.

Claims 20: A procurement method for ordering a special item comprising the steps of:

providing a common language generator;

providing an electronic common language generator knowledge base comprising predetermined rules and predetermined relationships:

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searching for an item within an electronic database;

determining that said item is not within said electronic database;

after it is determined that said item is not within said electronic database

performing the steps of:

(a) creating a structured requisition for uniquely describing said item,

(b) transmitting said structured requisition to at least one potential supplier,

(c) locating a desired supplier for said item, and

(d) adding information about said item from said structured

requisition to said electronic database normalized by said common

language generator according to said predetermined rules and relationships

of said common language generator knowledge base.

Claim 21: A procurement method as recited in claim 20, further comprising the step of normalizing said database by said common language generator using said knowledge base such that information from said requisition is categorized in accordance with class, attribute and value relationships.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-10 and 12-26 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: Statement of allowance is in reference to independent claims 1, 10, 17, and 20. All other claims are dependent on these independent claims.

The present application is directed to a procurement system and method that updates a database with information about an item that was not originally in the database. In particular, the independent claims 1, 10, 17, and 20 recite the novel, non-obvious feature of a common language generator, having a knowledge base with predetermined rules and relationships, normalizing information obtained from a requisition and adding the normalized information to the database. The Applicants' specification discloses that "normalizing" is the standardization of information with respect to class/attribute/value relationships (see page 3, lines 13-20). The Applicants have stated that "normalizing", as disclosed in the present application, is not the same as relational database normalization in the first, second, third, or fourth normal forms as is well known in the art and disclosed in the Korth reference (see Remarks submitted December 10, 2003, page 14, lines 8-11 and page 17, line 27 – page 18, line 4).

Discussion of most relevant art:

i) *US Patent 5,758,327* to Gardner et al. hereinafter referred to as Gardner. Gardner discloses an electronic requisition and authorization process that stores company-specific requisition rules which are used to process requisitions submitted by respective requestors of individual companies. Gardner discloses that a requestor generates a requisition to identify an item not found in an electronic catalog database (column 2, line 57 – column 3, line 3). Gardner also discloses that once the requisition is approved, the item can be directly communicated to a vendor. Gardner discloses facilitating purchases of products in an automated fashion by eliminating non-value-added

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activities thus suggesting that the non-catalog item is added to the electronic database (column 5, lines 24-43). However, Gardner fails to teach or suggest that a common language generator, having a knowledge base with predetermined rules and relationships, normalizes information obtained from a requisition and adds the normalized information to the database.

ii) *US Patent 5,197,005* to Shwartz et al. hereinafter referred to as Shwartz. Shwartz discloses a natural language interface that uses an expert system with a knowledge base to generate an SQL query from conversational English language. The query is then used to retrieve data from a database. However, Shwartz fails to teach or suggest that a common language generator, having a knowledge base with predetermined rules and relationships, normalizes information obtained from a requisition and adds the normalized information to the database.

iii) *"Zero Latency: Wait-less Computing"* by Eric B. Anderson, Dialog File 16, Accession #: 05926954 hereinafter referred to as Anderson. Anderson discloses the benefits of zero latency to an organization. In particular, Anderson discloses updating a purchasing database with pending orders. However, Anderson fails to teach or suggest that a common language generator, having a knowledge base with predetermined rules and relationships, normalizes information obtained from a requisition and adds the normalized information to the database.

iv) *WO 98/02835* to Post et al. hereinafter referred to as Post. Post discloses a system and method for matching products or services with individuals using an expert system with a knowledge base. Post fails to teach or suggest that a common language

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generator, having a knowledge base with predetermined rules and relationships, normalizes information obtained from a requisition and adds the normalized information to the database.

Conclusion

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Naeem Haq whose telephone number is (703)-305-3930. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:00am-5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Wynn W. Coggins can be reached on (703)-308-1344. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.


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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Naeem Haq, Patent Examiner
Art Unit 3625

October 29, 2004



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